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Leadership in London: from government to governance

Timothy Whitton

Abstract

The leadership of London became a priority in the 1990s and was one of New Labour's commitments in the build-up to the 1997 General Elections. To succeed, high level political involvement was vital and although New Labour's leadership threw its entire weight behind the project, little heed was paid to the possible outcome of the first mayoral elections.

Indeed, against all the odds, London's Ken Livingstone became the first directly elected mayor, won again in 2004 but lost to the Conservative candidate Boris Johnson in 2008 and again in 2012. He had nevertheless created a style of leadership based on his particular brand of celebrity that his successor fully embraced, but in his own fashion.

Whereas Livingstone wore out his welcome, Johnson used the mayoralty more unashamedly as a springboard for self-promotion. His two mandates came to a logical close in 2016 when he was replaced by Sadiq Khan whose expertise in communication has cut London politics adrift from the world of celebrity while engaging more rigorously in the process of replacing local government by local governance.

Keywords: London, Greater London Authority, leadership, celebrity, communication, Livingstone, Johnson, Khan.

Introduction

In 1991, the Conservatives very timidly broached the idea of creating strong local leadership via their Secretary of State for the environment, Michael Heseltine, but this was met with opposition both from local politicians and MPs, too wary of their style being cramped by the competition they feared this political move might create. The recent abolition of the Greater London Council had left the Conservatives with the bitter taste of humiliation due to the antics of Ken Livingstone and his cronies and there was no inclination from the head of the party whatsoever to hand any power back to what they feared would be left-leaning local authorities.¹

New Labour began toying with the idea of creating a new central authority in London after its fourth consecutive electoral defeat in 1992, but the real impetus came from Tony Blair who undoubtedly saw the potential of creating powerful local government - and especially mayors - according to the image that he believed government agents should embody. Yet, little did he know that his efforts to use the London mayoralty as a linchpin for the New Labour political project would be thwarted by an "old" Labour politician, namely Ken Livingstone. Despite all New Labour's efforts, Livingstone became the first directly elected mayor of London and enjoyed an eventful honeymoon with Londoners until 2008 when he was replaced by the Conservative, Boris Johnson.

Livingstone had created a precedent whereby Londoners showed that they were quite prepared to elect an outsider, even a maverick candidate, as long as he gave the impression that his priority was the capital and its inhabitants. In this respect, Johnson fitted the bill perfectly and compensated for his obvious lack of skill in dealing with municipal affairs by bubbling joviality;

¹ For a detailed account of their acts of defiance see Wes Whitehouse, *GLC – the Inside Story*, Middlesex, James Lester Publishers, 2000 & Timothy Whitton, *Ken « le rouge » et la Mairie de Londres. Du Greater London Council à la Greater London Authority*, Paris: l'Harmattan, 2010, pp. 15-33.

and by surrounding himself with a team of skilled experts capable of dealing with the nitty-gritty of local government.

However, Johnson had squarely set his sights on loftier functions namely the job of prime minister and although he won again in 2012 against Livingstone, the 2016 elections were the opportunity for a run-off between two completely “new” candidates. “Zac” Goldsmith and Sadiq Khan brought the political debate firmly back into the realm of party politics and without turning their backs on the celebrity status that their predecessors had bequeathed on London’s mayor, they relied heavily on their respective parties to bolster their candidacies which on many occasions implied tacking back and forth between party and local loyalties. Khan won hands down and was given the biggest mandate in the history of Great Britain.

This article will look at the different styles of leadership embodied by the first three mayors of London and see how they chime with the somewhat limited options envisaged by New Labour set out in the 2000 Local Government Act whose main aim was to provide a high-profile platform for local authorities to move away from their traditional structures of committee decision-making in order to embrace a more executive style of governance. It will also study to what extent celebrity has become the hallmark of London mayors, how the different candidates have dealt with this particular requirement that the job somewhat forces upon them while attempting to adopt a modern style of local government/governance in the capital.

Early days

After becoming leader of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1981, Ken Livingstone fought a running battle with Margaret Thatcher until the abolition of the Metropolitan Councils on April 1st, 1986. Her official aim was to “streamline the cities”,² but there is little doubt that her real ambition was to put an end to these bastions of left-wing governance which were a fundamental contradiction to her political project.³ Following abolition, London was governed by the 32 boroughs and a plethora of committees and organisations many of which were created *ad hoc* to deal with the everyday running of the city. Livingstone was unemployed but earned a healthy living by writing for the press.

In 1991, the Conservative Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine, floated the idea of introducing American style elected mayors as an answer to the often-touted idea that British local government lacked the “clout” that would make it more efficient.⁴ Yet his cabinet friends and indeed many of the party’s MPs poured scorn on the idea, doubtlessly afraid that it would deliver local authority control once again into the hands of the left-wing and in doing so generate petty friction between mayoralities and the constituencies.

The project was quietly dropped but not for long because once Tony Blair became leader of the Labour Party, he began to speak out clearly in favour of enabling electors to choose their local leaders: London was to be the beachhead of this initiative paving the way for other major cities to follow suit. A series of speeches and policy papers were devoted to the subject, but New Labour was particularly careful to emphasise the need for a “strategic” authority that would dovetail with their overall political project. This included a vast modernisation agenda of Britain’s local government in an attempt to make it more outward looking, constantly searching for partnerships that would put an end to the age-old reliance on the public sector. In short, there

² *Streamlining the Cities*, Command Paper 9063, HMSO, 1983.

³ This period is related in my article “All “Kens” to all men. Ken the chameleon : reinvention and representation. From the GLC to the GLA”, in, ‘Présentations, re-présentations, représentations’, *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, vol. XV, n°4, été 2010, pp. 131-147.

⁴ David Regan, *The Headless State: The Unaccountable Executive in Local Government*, Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1980.

was no going back to the days when Livingstone's team repeatedly brought Labour into disrepute adding inexorably to its reputation of being a party that was not fit for government.

Following New Labour's landslide victory in 1997, it set about enacting its manifesto promises and devolution to Scotland, Wales and indeed London was high on the agenda.⁵ A referendum was duly held in London in May 1998 and although turnout was low – some 34% – the government was given the green light by the capital's electorate to carry out its plans for creating a mayor and an assembly in London.⁶ Meanwhile, the main parties had already begun casting their nets to harness the collaboration of a candidate they felt would be in a position to tread the tricky path between party and national politics. It was felt that run-of-the-mill politicians would not quite fit the bill given the executive power that the government wanted to go with this high-profile job. Blair was particularly adamant about promoting one of his party's apparatchiks, in the belief that London's mayor would be an important player in the political project that he was keen to unfurl both nationally and internationally. Yet during this phase in the creation of London's mayoralty, New Labour entirely underestimated Ken Livingstone's ability to bounce back onto the front stage of politics.

New Labour's Livingstone

Each party devised its own selection process, but such was New Labour's desire to make a thoroughly clean break with its "old" Labour past, that it quite simply rigged the election by giving far more weight to the electoral colleges the most likely to toe the line, in order to make sure that its chosen candidate – Frank Dobson – would be elected.⁷ Livingstone had indeed refused to endorse the government's proposals to create a Public Private Partnership to renovate the underground and in doing so had betrayed his allegiance to the party and its commitments. He nevertheless decided to "go it alone" and run as an independent candidate; this meant exclusion from the party for five years but reinforced his popularity with an electorate that was becoming disillusioned with New Labour after 18 years of Conservative governments and keen to punish Blair for his election rigging. Electing a maverick, the David who for the sake of London was quite happy to take on the Goliath of spin, would be the perfect opportunity to fire a warning shot across the bows of New Labour.

Thus, Livingstone took to the streets at the helm of his purple bus asking people to "Hoot for Ken". Yet this outlandishly populist approach to the election was not "rent-a-quote" Livingstone's only ploy and he was also perfectly at home in talking about his experience at running a major city. His priority would involve strong leadership in order to promote policies dictated by the needs of the capital, and not by national politics. Nonetheless, Livingstone did not turn his back on his party and continually claimed from the outset of his independent candidacy that he had been "*forced to choose between the party I love and upholding the democratic rights of Londoners. I have concluded that defence of the principle of London's right to govern itself requires that I stand as an independent candidate for London mayor on 4 May.*"⁸ By laying responsibility for his exclusion firmly in the lap of New Labour, the stage was set for the outsider to once again take over leadership in London and away from the government's machinery. Livingstone's victory was less resounding

⁵ See for example *A Mayor and Assembly for London: the Government's Proposals for Modernising the Governance of London*, London, The Stationery Office, 1998, Cm. 3897.

⁶ Timothy Whitton, « La pratique référendaire et la Mairie de Londres », in, 'La pratique référendaire dans les îles britanniques', *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, Hors série n°2, été 2009, pp. 67-84.

⁷ These events are related in my article, " 'Nightmayor at City Hall', les coulisses d'une investiture, d'une élection et d'une réélection à Londres", in, Susan TROUVE, directrice de publication, *Les Coulisses du pouvoir*, Observatoire de la Société Britannique, n°6, juin 2008, pp. 197-225.

⁸ The Guardian, "Livingstone, I'm standing", 6/03/2000.

than he had hoped, but more significantly, the New Labour candidate only came in third and was thus knocked out of the second-round competition.

The election of the assembly members who are part and parcel of the Greater London Authority (GLA) was completely overshadowed by the mayoral election. Nine seats were obtained by Labour and the Conservatives, four by the Liberal democrats and three by the Green Party.⁹ The assembly is essentially consultative, its main task being to scrutinise the mayor's activities and can only prevent him from carrying out certain policy decisions by two thirds of the members refusing to vote the budget. This model of mayoralty was chosen to give London leadership a clear hand in bold decision making, thus making accountability crystal clear. To this end, twice a year the mayor is submitted to *People's Question Time*, public meetings during which he replies to questions from Londoners. Once a year the GLA organises the *State of London Debate* when the mayor goes over the mayoralty's plans for the capital. In short, the mayor is responsible for decision making and encouraging partnerships within the wider community, while overseeing projects that fall within the scope of the budget and the overall plan for the capital. One obvious example of this is the Congestion Charge introduced in February 2003 which for reasons linked to Livingstone's difficult relationship with central government, was introduced more or less under the sole responsibility of the mayor.¹⁰ Indeed, Livingstone knew that his political future hinged on the highly innovative and complex system of tracking vehicles that drove into the centre of London. His running battle with central government over the Public Private Partnership to renovate the underground was running out of steam and the Congestion Charge had become his battle horse.

There was no lack of teething problems, but by and large the system worked and what is more corresponded perfectly to New Labour's desire to foster partnerships to deliver quality services to the public. That the monitoring of the Congestion Charge be entrusted to a private company – Capita –, but overseen by the GLA, was music to New Labour's ears and although slightly begrudgingly, they acknowledged the success of the scheme all the more so as it was being carefully watched by other countries round the world. Nevertheless, with an election looming the following year and Livingstone riding high on the wave of the Congestion Charge, basking in the light of his reputation of being a key player in the realm of public services, New Labour had to find some way of reintegrating him into the party despite the five-year ban he was still under.¹¹ This was achieved after intense internal wrangling and led Livingstone to declare that both Thatcher and Blair had attempted to thwart his leadership, and both had failed.

Second mandate leadership and third elections

Following his reintegration, Livingstone and New Labour seemed to adopt a far more positive approach to cooperation between central government and the GLA. In a letter sent to the 50000 card holding members in London, the mayor declared that his work for public services in the capital corresponded to New Labour's overall project. There is little doubt, however, that the mayor traded this new relationship in return for government support – and finances – for several projects he had in mind including the construction of a new bridge across the Thames. *CrossRail* is another flagship project with the added attraction that it went hand in hand with London's bid

⁹ 14 seats are distributed on a constituency basis and the other eleven according to the Additional Members System.

¹⁰ Another appropriate example is the organisation of the 2012 Olympic Games which Tony Blair surely had in the back of his mind when devising plans for the GLA. He knew only full well that o Olympic committe would give the games to a city with no central authority.

¹¹ "Livingstone judged most influential figure in Britain's public services", *The Guardian*, September 10, 2003.

to host the 2012 Olympic Games. But above all, Livingstone wanted and obtained the right to be a key player in New Labour's manifesto for London.

Yet this new connivance with New Labour was a dangerous strategy given public disillusionment with the government due essentially to its involvement in the war in Iraq. Both New Labour and Livingstone knew only too well that London's electorate might be inclined to punish the government by voting for another candidate and this is what undoubtedly sparked off a flurry of outbursts by Livingstone on matters that had very little to do with London's mayoralty: by publicly stating that Ariel Sharon and Georges Bush were war criminals, he appeared more than anything else to be emphasising the freedom of speech that went hand in hand with the sort of leadership that he felt London deserved as opposed to the action of a party apparatchik. As it happened, while New Labour was punished heavily in the local elections on June 10th, losing by the same token three assembly seats, Livingstone was triumphant in London albeit with a narrower margin than in 2000. Somewhat crestfallen, the re-elected mayor nevertheless confirmed his allegiance to the Labour Party while soberly observing that the Conservatives were still a force to be reckoned with.

Livingstone's began his second mandate by sparking off an international outcry due to his inviting the very controversial Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi¹² to attend a conference at City Hall.¹³ This was the first of a series of *faux-pas* that were to dog his leadership and ultimately cause his downfall given his growing propensity to treat London as "his" city rather than Londoners'. His reputation for being "our Ken"¹⁴ was seriously tarnished during his second major brush with public opinion at the beginning of 2005 when he openly insulted a Jewish journalist with the ensuing court case receiving constant press coverage. Yet Livingstone's ability to clamber out of these troughs of opprobrium can be no better illustrated than his reaction to the 7/7 bomb attacks in London. The day after London was chosen to host the 2012 Olympic Games, 52 people were killed in a series of bomb attacks that shook the capital's multiculturalist beliefs to the very core. A week later, during a rally to denounce the attacks, Livingstone gave one of his greatest speeches as the leader of London, stating in Churchillian tones that the capital would not stoop to the level of the terrorists and come hell or high water would carry on defending its specificities.¹⁵ For once, Londoners rallied to the mayor's anguish at witnessing "his" city coming under attack.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives were searching for a candidate for the 2008 elections who would be able to beat Livingstone on his own turf, where celebrity, a certain form of independence from central government and loyalty to Londoners were the essential ingredients of strong, appropriate leadership. While Livingstone once again hit the headlines by inviting Hugo Chavez to London in order to clinch a "brooms for oil" deal whereby experts on urban management from London would trade their skills in Venezuela for cheap imports of oil, the Conservatives approached several candidates before finally setting their sights on Boris Johnson, MP for the safe seat of Henley-on-Thames. Just like his rival, "Boris" was on first name terms with the London electorate, regularly hosted the popular television show *Have I Got News for You*, and was well-known for being a maverick, popular outside the world of politics. To this end, the Conservatives drafted in Lynton Crosby, the Australian political strategist, who quickly pointed out the need to organise the campaign on traditional party lines rather than on personalities. If Livingstone's popularity was concentrated in the inner zones of London, the Conservatives

¹² Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi was well known for his homophobic and misogynist discourse and banned from entering the United States.

¹³ City Hall houses the Greater London Authority and was inaugurated in 2002.

¹⁴ To understand the different facets of Ken Livingstone, see my article "All 'Kens' to all men. Ken the chameleon : reinvention and representation. From the GLC to the GLA", in, 'Présentations, re-présentations, représentations', *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, vol. XV, n°4, été 2010, pp. 131-147.

¹⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BSIBPsbL9c>

needed to canvass in the outer boroughs where the electorate traditionally voted “Tory”: Boris’ celebrity would do the rest.

As from January 2008, Livingstone’s campaign ran into trouble linked to a batch of affairs¹⁶ that began to convince public opinion that he was no longer in tune with Londoners’ demands to have a mayor whose choice of governance was equated with the capital’s needs, rather than with his desire to strut the stage of international leadership. Crosby’s team latched firmly onto this main weakness and their choice of slogan, *Time for a Change*, struck a particular chord with the electorate, all the more so as *Vote for London – Ken* seemed to say it all: London had become Livingstone’s city and he felt that he alone personified the leadership that it needed.

On July 7th, 2007, the Daily Telegraph’s title ran “*Ken Livingstone will be re-elected without a single credible challenger*”. They were wrong and Lynton Crosby was right in claiming that the Conservatives had to harness support in the outer boroughs where the electorate would be more inclined to express their preference according to traditional voting patterns. Turnout was higher than in the previous elections given the “Ken versus Boris” phenomenon: Ken was popular but Boris was a celebrity. The former had inadvertently tried to turn London into his city under his very personal style of strong leadership whereas the latter’s notorious incompetence in municipal affairs meant that he would be surrounding himself with a team of advisors for whom he would act as a high-profile executor. Little did the team realise, though, to what extent they would have their work cut-out by their boss’ ramblings, gaffes, lack of political communication savvy and above all competition with his rival David Cameron.

Over to Boris

Johnson’s first six months as mayor witnessed a series of resignations within his team which smacked of his predecessor’s last six months in power.¹⁷ This questioned the model of leadership proposed because whereas Livingstone had been closely involved not only with overall policy framework, but also with the nitty-gritty of enactment, his successor readily entrusted a great deal of the groundwork to a team of managers. However, the economic situation was far less rosy for Johnson which entailed a lack of resources and a good deal of frustration among his team who for want of a flagship project, found themselves in the unenviable position of enacting the former mayor’s plans such as the system of hire, ride and drop-off bicycles imitating the Parisian “Vélib” system quickly to be known as Borisbikes. Three of Johnson’s manifesto pledges were nonetheless enacted namely the ban on alcohol in public transport, the abandoning of the Congestion Charge’s western extension as well as the GLA’s information newspaper, *The Londoner* considered to be no little more than a weapon of propaganda for the mayor.

Yet it was Johnson’s knack of turning his job into a permanent political show, constantly playing to his audiences’ desire for the sort of clownery that had given him his celebrity status in the first place, that was proving to be difficult for his team to handle. All the more so as the first mandate was taking place against the backdrop of the 2012 Olympic Games, the organisation of which was officially handed over to the GLA in Beijing in August 2008 with Johnson’s flag-waving during the ceremony being described as a “unique collaboration between JK Rowling and the

¹⁶ Contrary to popular demand, Livingstone had extended the Congestion Charge zone. He had also opened London offices in Brussels, Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai and New Delhi. Above all, his deputy, Lee Jasper became embroiled in an affair of corruption as did another deputy, Rosemary Emodi, thus underlining his penchant for brazen clientelism. Livingstone’s attacks on prominent members of the Jewish community were branding him as an anti-Semite while his alcoholism, his free-hand in lending the GLA’s premises to a plethora of colourful and friendly associations and the Olympic budget that seemed to be spiralling out of control added to the chinks in the armour.

¹⁷ The most significant was undoubtedly the departure of deputy mayor Ray Lewis, whose remit was to tackle the growing problem of knife-crime in the city.

Beano”.¹⁸ Even if the decision to host them in London had been taken during Livingstone’s second mandate, there is no doubt that Johnson’s future as mayor of London would be inextricably linked to the success of the Games, despite the fact that the budget had already spiralled out of control during his predecessor’s term in office.

The economy was precisely where Johnson chose to play one of his main leadership cards by conspicuously portraying himself as the champion of financial London ostensibly to attract foreign investment but in an unveiled attempt to show his independence vis-à-vis his political party and central government. The 2010 election had indeed produced a coalition that he felt little sympathy for especially given his party’s careful avoidance of pandering to the rich as part of their overall desire to shed the mantle of being the “nasty” party. Many of Johnson’s policies were being hampered by the economic downturn which gave little leeway for innovative schemes but this did not prevent him from pleading the case for the capital’s potential of leading the way for the whole country: what could be achieved in London could be achieved nationwide.

Whether this was his way of using the mayoralty as a springboard in his bid to become Prime Minister is debateable at this stage, but his popularity among the grassroots of the party was definitely pointing him in the direction of n°10. Livingstone too had understood the potential for the mayoral election to be a platform in order to speak out against central government’s austerity measures and cuts in public services. This move was also intended to make his main rival for the 2012 elections carry the can for his political affiliation and once chosen as candidate for the Labour Party he openly declared that “the Government’s cuts are his cuts” making it clear in the same breath that Johnson could now be held to account for his record and no longer be trusted on mere reputation.¹⁹

From Boris to Sadiq

The 2012 election was a simple rematch between “Ken” and “Boris”, a dual between the candidates of the two main parties that Londoners had become used to when it came to choosing their local leader. While Livingstone relied heavily on the social networks to bolster his campaign, Johnson once again had recourse to Crosby’s skills and the outer boroughs were meticulously canvassed. Despite the lack of any flagship policy, the Olympic Games which were to take place three months later had indeed generated a feeling of optimism in the capital which Johnson’s team tapped into leaving his contender to exploit the more fastidious details of municipal politics and the overall context of cuts. Cameron was only too pleased to give his support to Johnson undoubtedly hoping that this would keep one of his main rivals at bay but also with the ambition that the London mayoralty would remain an emblem of the municipal modernity that the Conservative Party wanted to espouse.

Johnson won by a shorter head than in 2008 and rapidly declared that he would not be seeking a third term. This fuelled speculation about his possible bid to become Prime Minister but also about the future of London’s governance: Livingstone and Johnson had created two different brands of strong personal leadership that it would be impossible to imitate, yet future candidates knew that they too would have to obey the rules of celebrity politics and the ensuing popularity that the job entailed. While Johnson busied himself with declarations concerning the construction of the Garden Bridge, as per usual, the two main parties groomed their champions. For the Conservatives, Zac Goldsmith won the primaries quite comfortably, whereas his future rival, Sadiq Khan, was not the party’s natural candidate at the outset given his conflict of loyalties

¹⁸ See “BBC coverage needed Boris bombing into the Olympic pool”, *The Independent*, 01/08/2011.

¹⁹ Livingstone also stated that «If you want to get them out, we start by getting out Boris Johnson» <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsvideo/uk-politics-video/8022467/Ken-Livingstone-is-Labours-London-Mayoral-candidate.html> accessed 01/01/2018.

within the Labour Party. As the two prepared the dual that would ultimately decide the choice of mayor in 2016, so did the electorate get a glimpse of the types of leadership that each candidate would promote.

Khan was eager to convince Londoners that he had a clear perception of the mayor's soft power to enable rather than undertake, talked of ambitions and priorities that were embedded in policies and did not put forward a single flagship policy. Goldsmith, on the other hand, couched his plans in far more philosophical terms, suggesting that ecological considerations would be paramount in his approach to the leadership of London. It was his team's negative campaigning however, which handed Kahn his substantial victory in 2016, in fact the biggest popular mandate ever given to a British politician.²⁰ The London electorate seemed far more interested in what the candidates had to offer in terms of housing, transport, the environment, taxes and pollution rather than the sleaze and mud-slinging that had crept into the campaign for this particular election, particularly when Goldsmith's team had reverted to fear tactics in a last-ditch attempt to shore up their candidate's failing campaign: even if early polls had shown that Londoners did not feel "comfortable" at the idea of having a Muslim mayor, Khan's ability to adapt his soft approach to the capital's needs had finally won the day.²¹

Conclusion

The GLA model as stipulated by the 2000 Local Government Act is by and large the mayor/cabinet one. Within this structure, the directly elected mayor enjoys a high-profile platform which in London was exacerbated by the unplanned antagonism that arose initially between the independent candidate Ken Livingstone and New Labour. He used this to his full advantage to establish a very personal style of leadership that was to merge celebrity and independence within traditional political structures. Although local politics come low on the agenda of the voting public, they do seem to welcome high profile candidates if only because of the media attention they can harness, thus introducing a higher degree of interest in what would otherwise be a dull contest.

Livingstone created a precedent all the more so as the GLA assembly is essentially consultative which means that a high-profile mayor will inevitably be tempted to carry out high-profile projects. The Congestion Charge is perhaps the most prominent example given that support from the assembly was to say the least, lukewarm. Thus, the mayor of London can be strong within the GLA but given that mainstream services continue to be provided by the boroughs with the authority playing the role of overseer, weaker within London governance. Nevertheless, as local government leaders tend to embrace more and more the well-being of areas and indeed communities, Livingstone will always stand out as having attempted to fulfil this role: too much some would say given that it led to his own demise when he began to treat London as "his" city, rather than that of Londoners.

Johnson acted more as a sort of *agent provocateur*, reaching out and over the different communities by paying lip service only to himself and by creating a followership within his party - and indeed the London electorate - only too eager to elect maverick candidates to express their dissatisfaction with central government. It had worked for his predecessor and Johnson's team knew that they needed a candidate who could beat Livingstone on his own turf.

²⁰ Khan was also for Brexain and for him this was a policy. Goldsmith's Brexit corresponded to one of his entrenched convictions. Given that London voted for Brexain, Goldsmith undoubtedly lost votes because of his anti-European stance.

²¹ "One in three Londoners feel 'uncomfortable' with the prospect of a Muslim Mayor poll finds; two leading Conservative and Labour candidates for London Mayor are Muslims", *The Independent*, 13 August 2015.

It is perhaps too early to assess the impact of Sadiq Khan's personal style on the leadership of London but it certainly is of the more facilitative type. Khan focusses on creating a vision and securing broad London-wide commitment to it. This goes hand in hand with skilfully managed communication, a field where London leadership has changed fundamentally since the mandates of Livingstone and Johnson.

Consensual participation has been sought by all three mayors of London rather than recourse to the powers of command. Khan embodies perhaps the best the communication skills of the modern politician but his predecessors stand out far more for their ability to place London in the national and international limelight. This said, the number of councils which have opted for the mayoral model is very low and would tend to suggest that Ken, Boris and Sadiq's leadership talents have not played the role model that initially was expected of them. Under their leadership the shift from government to governance has definitely taken place but not to the extent that a multitude of other councils have wanted to follow suit. Greater empowerment of local authorities would certainly encourage a further shift towards local governance but the political impetus for this to come about is lacking on all sides of the political spectrum.

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